



AIR COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE (ACSC)
MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA 36112

13 MAY 1982

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[Redacted]
Assistant National Intelligence Officer
for Strategic Programs
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D. C. 20505

Dear [Redacted]

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I am most pleased to invite you to address selected members of the Air Command and Staff College (ACSC) Class of 1982 in the "Intelligence and National Security" Tailored Instructional Program (TIP) on 1 June 1982 at 0830. A two-hour period has been reserved for you to discuss Strategic Intelligence Estimates. Please use this time as you deem appropriate--formal lecture, informal remarks, question and answer, or any combination thereof.

The TIP is an elective course designed for ACSC course officers with follow-on assignments to national or Department of Defense intelligence organizations or to operations, plans, programs, or R&D staff positions which involve the use of national intelligence products. It is intended to provide an introduction to the history, structure, and operation of the US Intelligence Community and the production and use of intelligence products. Your wealth of knowledge and experience will provide the course officers a valuable insight into the intelligence activities of this country.

Lieutenant Colonel Robert E. Setlow, telephone (205) 293-6519 will coordinate the details of your visit.

I greatly appreciate your support of our educational program and look forward to having you as our guest next month.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Robert W. Kline".

ROBERT W. KLINE
Colonel, USAF
Vice Commandant

STRATEGIC INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS

W70014-1L/10

OBJECTIVES:

1. Comprehend the major issues involved in the production of intelligence estimates on Soviet strategic forces and objectives.

1.1 Summarize the historical record of U.S. Intelligence estimates on Soviet strategic forces.

1.2 Explain the analytical methodologies employed in estimating the present and future capabilities of Soviet strategic forces.

1.3 Give examples of the major problems encountered in producing estimates on Soviet forces and objectives.

OVERVIEW:

Estimative intelligence on Soviet strategic forces and objectives constitutes one of the principal production functions of the U.S. Intelligence Community. As we develop and deploy our own strategic forces, it is important that military planners and defense policymakers understand present and future Soviet strategic capabilities and comprehend likely Soviet responses to our policies and actions. The arms control negotiations of the past decade have given impetus to the efforts of the Intelligence Community to improve the quality of its estimates.

Planners and policymakers must, however, bear in mind the limitations of estimative intelligence, as Klaus Knorr points out in one of the later readings:

Although the future, within some framework of particulars, can be estimated, it cannot, of course, be known. To estimate is to guess in order to reduce uncertainty dictated by lack of knowledge. The assumptions and preconceptions about reality that structure the guesswork can be more or less rigorously deduced from past behavior. But--as the historical record discloses...--even the most sophisticated assumptions can lead threat perception astray. To depend wholly on any one preconception or set of assumptions is to court surprise. This risk is magnified by the tendency that the selection of an assumption about the real world becomes an act of cognitive closure that easily leads the perceiver to be close-minded and to ignore or explain away

discrepant information. It must therefore be accepted that although good estimates can reduce uncertainty about the future, even the best cannot be depended on to prove it.

Knorr also identifies several kinds of predispositions that intervene to affect the selection of assumptions and receptivity to incoming information and which are apt to distort estimates. Among these are emotions, strong ideological commitments, bureaucratic behavior, and wishful thinking.

Bear these considerations in mind while you review the controversy over U.S. intelligence estimates of Soviet strategic forces in the readings. We will have an opportunity to explore them more deeply during the lecture on weapon system analysis as applied to Soviet strategic estimates. Two of the historically controversial subject areas of these estimates--Soviet strategic bombers and ICBM's--will be highlighted to illustrate the techniques of weapon system analysis.

READINGS:

Assigned:

"Debate Over U.S. Strategic Forecasts: A Mixed Record"

"The National Intelligence Estimates A-B Team Episode
Concerning Soviet Strategic Capability and Objectives"